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THE DESIGN FILES + LAMINEX AWARDS

By ELIZABETH CLARKE

A fresh take on the classic Australian beach shack and a home designed to embrace its neighbours are among the winners of The Design Files + Laminex Design Awards 2020.

Announced in a live-streamed online ceremony, the annual event is Australia's only cross-disciplinary awards program. Recognising the ingenuity and innovation of local designers and

creatives, it spans 10 diverse categories including interiors, sustainable design and lighting.

"Celebrating such a diverse cross-section of designers has united us as a community, and highlights our remarkable strength and resilience," Lucy Feagins, founder of The Design Files, says.

The judging panel included landscape designer Paul Bangay, interior designer Mim Fanning of Mim

Design, and Karen Alcock of MA Architects, who chose 10 winners from 119 finalists, including a high number of First Nations designers, three of whom took home top honours. "With a significant increase in the number of First Nations designers and collaborations this year compared to 2019, we sense a real coming together of contemporary and Indigenous Australian design," Feagins says.



Interior Design

YSG Studio, Budge Over Dover

The reimagining of an elapsed Dover Heights dwelling into a raw and revolutionary coastal abode saw Yasmine Saleh Ghoniem, of YSG, take out top honours in the Interior Design category. Galvanised by her Middle Eastern childhood and time studying and working in the US, it embodies vibrance, soul, and different cultures.

"It's a home that could be located in any country," Feagins says. "It's very cosmopolitan which reflects Australia today. It's like no other local project we've seen and sets a benchmark for a new direction in interiors."

Texture and colour link in controlled harmony. A subtle and saturated scheme of moss, dusty pink, eggplant and toffee sit alongside raw concrete, terracotta, natural stone, black-stained timber, velvet, aged brass, and Marmorino plaster which is applied to selected walls and ceilings throughout.

"It's an Italian artisan finish we see in 1940s and '50s buildings in Milan," Feagins says. "It creates texture and a canvas for the home's refined and organic finishes. It's truly beautiful."

It's this articulate application of different design and cultural elements that make Ghoniem's project a true winner. "It's a new approach by a young studio headed by a young woman," Feagins says. "It feels like a future icon."

Budge Over Dover by YSG Studio, left; **Bourke Street Apartment** by Fowler and Ward Architects, opposite bottom.

2020 WINNERS & COMMENDATIONS

RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

Winner: Andrew Burges Architects, Bismarck House

Commendation: Archier & HIP V. HYPE, Davison Street

Commendation: CO-AP Architects, Woollahra Courtyard House

Commendation: Vokes and Peters, Highgate Park House

INTERIOR DESIGN

Winner: YSG Studio, Budge Over Dover

Commendation: Studio Moore, Ross Farm – Barn

Commendation: Hearth Studio, Slow Beam

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Winner: Kathleen Murphy Landscape Design, Native Retreat-Studio Garden

Commendation: Garden Life, Palm Beach Garden

Commendation: Kate Seddon Landscape Design, The Composed Garden

LIGHTING DESIGN

Winner: Copper Design, Flask lighting system

Commendation: Ross Gardam, Ceto

Commendation: Dale Hardiman + Stephen Royce, Open Garden

FURNITURE DESIGN

Winner: Adam Goodrum + Arthur Seigneur, Exquisite Corpse, 'Longbow' credenza

Commendation: Danielle Brustman, Chromatic Fantastic Cabinet

Commendation: Manapan x Foolsap Studio, Gulnura Table

TEXTILE DESIGN

Winner: North, Tiwi Strong Women's Collection

Commendation: Kip + Co with Bábbarra Women's Centre

Commendation: Ellen McKenna, From Art to Fashion

HANDCRAFTED

Winner: Tjunkaya Tapaya of Tjanpi Desert Weavers, Tjanpi Teapot

Commendation: Szilvassy, Aether ceramics

Commendation: James Lemon, Pest Chairs

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN OR INITIATIVE

Winner: Good Citizens, 100% recycled eyewear

Commendation: Dowel Jones + Soft Serve Studio, New Model

Commendation: Returnr, deposit-return system + products

COLLABORATION

Winner: Edition Office + Daniel Boyd, For Our Country

Commendation: Edition Office + Yhonnie Scarce, In Absence

Commendation: Manapan Furniture x Foolsap Studio, Gulnura furniture suite

EMERGING DESIGNER

Winner: Fowler and Ward Architects

Bismarck House by Andrew Burges Architects, far left; Flask lighting system by Copper Design, left.

“We have backgrounds in super-collaborative practices where there was little hierarchy in the design process, so we love working collaboratively and find that the more ideas on the table, the better.”

Fowler and Ward share a 16-year friendship, nine completed projects including their much-lauded Bourke Street Apartment, and a 2020 Australian Interior Design Award for Emerging Interior Design Practice.

With a focus on residential renovations and new builds, their approach to creative problem-solving made them a predominant entry.

“They display creative problem solving on smaller scale projects with more modest budgets,” Feagins says. “Often the winners are the big multimillion-dollar projects, but we see interesting problem solving when a designer is working within tight parameters. Meaningful projects happen when affordability is viewed as a design challenge rather than a problem.”

Lighting


Copper Design, Flask lighting system

“Unless you are in it, this is a hidden industry you may not know about,” Feagins says of Australian lighting design. “It’s a quiet achiever, with a strong local glass blowing movement that encourages ... local manufacturing in an artisanal way.”

Edward Linacre and Viktor Legin, of Copper industrial design practice, were lauded for their customisable mouth-blown glass lighting system that shows light refracting through coloured glass.

A mesh of stunning hues and hand-finished metal tubing, it includes sconces, pendants and tubular mounts with the ability to be used in different ways and applications.

“It’s a handcrafted and distinctly artisanal product that offers uniformity and consistency as a collection,” Feagins says.

“In making mouth-blown glass completely customisable with endless options for colour, shape and glass thickness, shows true innovation.” 



CAITLIN MILLS



KIMBERLEY LOW

Residential Architecture

Andrew Burges Architects, Bismarck House

The most outstanding home is neither a gigantic project nor grand home, but a contemporary community-minded Bondi Beach house that has a direct relationship with its streetscape. “It encapsulates industrial utilitarian materiality while evoking a beachy breezy vibe,” Feagins says. “It’s not overly decorative, just beautifully appointed finishes. It’s a true standout.”

A post-war house slated for demolition, the owners were attracted to its corner location and side laneway for its proximity to the street. Retaining part of its original facade, architect Andrew Burges set about rebuilding the home, using its original bricks while referencing outdoor elements, such as brick, concrete, mesh and timber.

“There’s a trend to bring robust textures into a build, so rather than clean boards, there’s raw textures throughout, from the patina of the bricks to the rendered concrete upstairs,” Feagins says.

It features a series of direct interfaces – most notable is a shop-like window from the kitchen into the laneway. “You can peek in and see the family preparing breakfast,” Feagins says. “It’s a gesture that indicates their desire to be a part of the community.”

Equally remarkable is the seamless flow between indoors and the garden, with its curvaceous exterior allowing the landscaping to weave around the site.

“You discover a new detail and moment at every turn,” judge and architect John Wardle says. “The sequence of small spaces that align within the slender plan appear to be carved out of garden.”

Emerging Designer

Fowler and Ward Architects

Launching a new business weeks before a pandemic hits could be unfortunate, but for Emerging Designer winners Jessie Fowler and Tara Ward, it proved otherwise.

“Working apart from one another reinforced the value of collaboration,” Fowler says.



TOM BLACHFORD